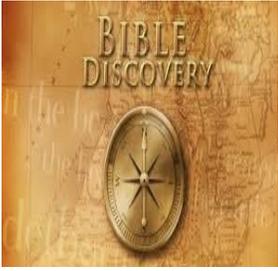


Discovering Blessings from our Lord



In our modern age of pleasure all of us seem to be seeking to count ourselves among those who are “*blessed*” of God. On the one hand, God blesses all people, whether or not they acknowledge Him. This is not the kind of blessing however that sets believers apart from the rest of the world; if this is the only blessing we can point to, then we should consider whether we’ve been blessed of God at all. To be truly blessed of God means to be “*on our knees*”

before Him. It means to humble ourselves rather than stand proud under our own accord. Being blessed is an act of faith, of trust, and means that we relinquish all our personal hopes, aspirations, and ideas in exchange for the precious, great promises of God.

But to enter into this most fundamental condition it is necessary to realize this is not our condition by nature. In the Hebrew alphabet the first word of Psalm 1, “*blessed*” begins with the first letter and the last word, “*perish*” begins with the last letter. This creative device sets out bookends within which are found the answers you need to the greatest questions anyone can ask...

**Who am I and who is God; how can I know Him?
Where is happiness to be found?
What roads should I take in my life?
Who should be my closest friends and companions?
What is the nature of a life lived with God and how do I live it?**

The psalmist answers these questions first, by sending us to our *first* parents where they were blessed under the shade of the Tree of Life within the Garden of Eden – *a tree planted by streams of water*, delighting in the presence of the Lord, meditating on God’s Law day and night, living life to the full until they rebelled ending up living amongst the thorns, perishing. The psalmist is yelling his message to us, “Don’t make their mistake! “Don’t perish!” He cries, “Stay the course. Remain solid with God!”

The Psalmist is insistent there are only two options for us.

- There are blessed people, and
- There are wicked people.

Two categories – we’re either in one or the other. The Lord Jesus spoke of the last day with all mankind divided into either ‘sheep’ or ‘goats’; everyone fits into one or the other, their destination as different as heaven and hell. There’s no ‘in-between’, no compromise through tolerance. It’s an either/or; you can’t belong to both. You’re either blessed by God **or** a wicked person doomed to perish.

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If you would be a blessed person then there are people whose company you must avoid because they’ll lead you astray. Perhaps you’re familiar with the saying, “*Those*

who lie down with dogs will rise up with fleas.” Stay away from the fleas; pursue the life a blessed person!

The blessed person is the one who’s discovered a new delight in life. His delight is in the Lord, in *“the law of the Lord.”* So are we blessed in the God revealed within Scripture, and is our delight in His Word, the Bible? We can’t hear it preached too often. We must read it, meditate on it - day and night. In it we find the living God **and** we find ourselves portrayed.

- It’s the best medicine when we’re sick.
- It’s the answer to all our problems;
- It brings satisfaction to our greatest needs.

Remember Paul saying to the Thessalonians, *“I thank God that you received my word not as the words of men, but for what it really is: the word of God.”* The Thessalonians took *delight* in the word they heard, just like the psalmist, and we’re also encouraged to be thrilled with it!

Think of the observation recorded in the book *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch*. The Russian writer remembers sharing a freezing dormitory of a gulag prison with a Baptist pastor. The preacher would take his New Testament from its hiding place reading it aloud day after day. The men around him heard those words. It kept the pastor in touch with the calling for which he suffered. It gave him a purpose to go on living in that horrible regimen of prison life. That was *his* delight. There is such delight for you to discover; the wonderful grace of God who transforms us by His Word. Delight in it! Meditate in it! Live by it! Even when it makes you uncomfortable, as it will - live by the Book, and then you’ll be like the psalmist, one who is blessed.

But remember, either evil influences will try to keep you from this Book or the Scriptures will keep you from evil influences. Sin never takes a holiday; sin wants deeds and consummation and death. In Psalm 1 we’re shown how we are drawn into sin - not just walking with a wicked man but then hanging around with them – standing with the wicked; listening to them talk so knowledgably about things which they know so little of, and which are utterly unimportant. See them nod their heads and impatiently wait their turn to boast and scheme as you stand among them.

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers” [v.1].

But there is yet another step, no longer walking or standing; so easily we’re *sitting* with those who mock purity, and modesty, and self-control, and the Word of God. It is the natural discourse of men and women sitting together without knowing God. You hang out with them for a time. *They’ve got you!* You’ve become just like them - *unblessed*. Walking; standing; sitting – where are you in that process? Beware!

If you’re blessed by God, you live a fruitful life knowing meaning & purpose. What does the Word of God do to those who delight in it? It makes them give up their lives in service to God and others.

- In a world where people are cold & hard, they demonstrate the fruit of love.
- In a world where men & women are totally discouraged with life they demonstrate the fruit of joy.

**God transforms
us by His Word.**

Delight in it!

Meditate in it!

Live by it!

- In a world full of angry people falling out with one another, they demonstrate peacemaking fruit.
- Where people are short-tempered, snarling at one another, these people demonstrate the fruit of longsuffering & gentleness.
- In a land where women & men break their marriage vows they're faithful.
- In a society where people are encouraged to give in to their feelings – “*if you want it go for it*” – they're self-controlled.

They're blessed; they leave a blessing! What makes them like that? The indwelling Holy Spirit! He's that river of water. He flows into them with gentle washing, purifying through refreshing power. He makes them fruitful. Think what He did for a tinker named John Bunyan. The Holy Spirit of God made him exceedingly fruitful within a foul prison during twelve long years without one leaf of grace withering in his life. Like trees planted by streams of water yielding fruit in season, we too are to be indwelled by God' Spirit, transformed by the message of the word of God.

That is what this psalm is saying! When relations with God prosper, Christ-likeness prospers and wisdom prospers. And therefore homes prosper; churches prosper; our worship prospers. Though we deserve eternal death - we're sinners, yet Jesus, because He loves us, died for us.

This then is the blessed life – *but not so for the wicked*. Those living the blessed life bear the fruit of conviction of sin, & repentance & holy living – *but not so for the wicked*. This is fulfilling man's call to glorify God – *but not so for the wicked*. Consider Jay Gould, the American multi-millionaire. When dying, he said, “*I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth.*” Think of Lord Beaconsfield who enjoyed wealth and fame and power. He wrote: “*Youth is a mistake; manhood a struggle; old age regret.*” Think of the howling winds of money, perversion, prestige, greed, debauchery - carrying away millions of lives today. They'll never be in the assembly of the righteous around the throne of God, never see the Lamb in the glory of heaven forever. Their way - the way of the wicked - is that they perish.

***Their way
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That is what lies before you today. The great battle for men's souls rages. A fine line every soul walks between everlasting redemption and eternal damnation. If you defy this great Saviour, eternity is just a breath away – perished forever. But if you accept Christ – oh what a difference exists just a heartbeat away – you are blessed, “*For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous*” [v.6]. Certainly God bestows His favour and blessings on us.

But unless we bend the knee before Him and open ourselves to knowing Him, surrendered to doing His will, we'll never discover the true and full meaning of what it is to be blessed. I beseech you; do you see this attitude reflected in every aspect of your life? Are there areas of your life where you think more of your devotion to Jesus – and His blessing – should be in evidence? There's no other way to find the blessing of God than through trusting in Jesus Christ, at every moment looking to Jesus to keep us in Him and on our knees before the Father of all blessing. Be blessed in Christ. By personal faith entrust yourself to Him today.